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ABSTRACT

This document discusses the advantages of integrating social studies--geography in particular--and reading skills. Time is saved because literature based reading is a high interest means of introducing social studies concepts and vocabulary to children. Skills can be taught using the vocabulary from the social studies unit. This paper presents generic activities that can be used in many ways and adapted to almost any social studies unit or literature based reading program. The reading skills activities presented in this article are vowel sounds, blends, rhymes, digraphs, vocabulary drill, alphabetical order and sequencing, describing words, sorting and classifying words, compound words, syllable identification, and compare and contrast exercises. Integrating social studies and reading skills serves two purposes: (1) to reinforce reading skills and (2) to reinforce social studies vocabulary and concepts. Integrating reading skills with social studies vocabulary allows teachers opportunities to see if students can apply these skills in a non-reading situation. Activities discussed are brainstorming, crossword puzzles, sorting and classifying, puzzle boxes, word searches, alphabetical lists, word and picture matches, and designing travel brochures and posters. Illustrative figures are included for brainstorming, sorting, crossword puzzles, classifying, sorting, acrostics, blends and digraphs, puzzle boxes, word searches, vowel sounds, alphabetical order, dot to dot tracing, word and picture match, and describing and rhyming words. (DK)

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GEOGRAPHY AND READING: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TEACHING READING SKILLS

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GEOGRAPHY AND READING: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TEACHING READING SKILLS

ABSTRACT: Social studies presents an exciting venue for teachers who, pressed for time, see the need for integrating social studies (geography) and reading skills. Literature based reading is a high interest means of introducing social studies concepts and vocabulary to children. Skills can also be taught using the vocabulary from the social studies unit. This saves time. Presented are many generic activities which can be used in many ways and adapted to almost any social studies unit or literature based reading program. Most of all, these activities are fun. Children learn from them and they enjoy doing these activities!

KEY WORDS: vocabulary, reading skills, sequenced instruction, literature based reading, word analysis, phonics, social studies vocabulary

GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

Social studies and reading make terrific partners! Children have a huge interest in the world around them. The vocabulary presented during a social studies is of high frequency: these words are used a great deal of the time during the unit. Capitalize on high frequency social studies vocabulary: use it to teach reading skills. The reading skills activities presented in this article are: vowel sounds, blends, rhymes, digraphs, vocabulary drill, alphabetical order, sequencing, describing words, sorting, classifying, and compound words syllable identification, and compare/contrast.

Integrating social studies and reading skills serves two purposes: 1. reading skills are reinforced and 2. social studies vocabulary and concepts are reinforced. Integrating these two subject areas also saves teaching and preparation time. It seems that every year, there is more to teach in the same amount of time!

All of the activities presented are generic. They can be used equally well at any grade level or with a group of children of any ability level. These activities can be used with any social studies unit. (You can try these activities with science units, too.) Save your creations from one year to the next. You may not always use the same activities with every group, but having a repertoire of activities helps to make you a better teacher. Develop a collegial rapport with your peers: share with them. If each member of your team

develops reading skills with social studies activities for a unit, you all have that many more activities to draw from. Some of these activities can be dittoed or photocopied for seat work. These seat work activities are fun, challenging, and meaningful. Developing reading skills with social studies vocabulary helps students with their creative writing. Many activities can be used as small group assignments. This helps students learn to work cooperatively. You can also use these activities in a whole class setting with you, the teacher, as the recorder.

Save time correcting student work- let students correct their work with you. Put answers on the blackboard or the overhead projector. Remember, don't just show them the answers. Take time to read each example and discuss. Discussion strengthens speaking and listening skills. Many students will remember vocabulary and concepts better after they hear a peer explain it. These activities are designed to be fun- so enjoy yourself.

The skills can be used in many ways and in different situations. Integrating reading skills with social studies vocabulary allows teachers opportunities to see if students can apply these skills in a non-reading situation. Teachers can use social studies vocabulary to teach reading skills during a directed activity. Direct instruction of new skills using social studies vocabulary assists students in learning

both the new skill and the new vocabulary.

Teachers can use examples of vocabulary from the social studies unit as a beginning point to introduce other examples of words with the same skill. If studying China and reading about Ping, the Duck, the teacher can introduce "China" in context, explain the "ch" digraph and proceed to introduce many other words with the "ch" sound.

This means that it is necessary for teachers to do a critical reading of texts used for social studies/literature based reading activities. It is necessary for teachers to actively look for words with which they can build skill lessons.

Careful pre-planning is necessary to successfully use reading skills with social studies instruction. By writing out vocabulary first, and then looking for patterns which form a nucleus for skills lessons, teachers can effectively and efficently teach both vocabulary and reading skills. Of course, this takes time. But if a teacher does one unit per semester, gradually an entire year's worth of skill lessons will be developed. Again, sharing with colleagues saves time and builds activity units faster. For this article, I have used activities which I developed for our social studies unit on families in China. Remember, the activities are generic: they can be applied to any social studies unit.

GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

Brainstorming is an essential part of building reading/social studies vocabulary (see figure 1.) The teacher can create lists of words at the beginning of each unit. Pre-planning is essential. Children can brainstorm independently, as small groups, and as an entire class with the teacher as the recorder. It is important to teach the children to piggyback on the ideas of others. Piggybacking helps children think of more ideas based upon another's suggestions. The teacher, who is familiar with the vocabulary from the unit, can also ask prompting questions. If reading literature about the area under study, more vocabulary can be added to the brainstorm list. The vocabulary list is hung prominently in the room. This word bank will be used by the children to complete many activities. The teacher or students can add to he list as the children learn more new words during the unit. By critically analyzing the word list, the teacher can develop vocabulary/reading skills activities to reinforce instruction fort both content areas. The activities in this article are based upon a first grade social studies on China. The examples are those which I have used with my students.

Crossword puzzles (see figure 2) are fun for teacher and student alike. Crossword puzzles are easier to construct if you use one half inch graph paper. It is easier to block out the positions of the words and then draw lines around the

boxes. First grade students can learn the crossword process with the teacher's assistance. There are computer programs which generate crossword puzzles. If you use computer programs, remember to use lower case letters since we teach children to read using lower, not upper, case letters. Simply constructed, the crossword puzzles become more difficult as the year progresses. I usually provide a word bank for the children to refer to. Crossword puzzlers are not spelling tests; word banks are reference tools for students. Teach the children to also refer to the word bank (brainstormed list) which is hanging in the room.

Sorting/Classifying are skills which help children discriminate among categories. They are thinking skills activities. There are several types of sorting activities. In each of the activities, I provide a word bank for students to use. You may not find this necessary with intermediate students, especially if the word list is displayed in the room. In this sorting activity (see figure 3) the students must find one word from the word bank which belongs to the larger category. Thus, if the category is "food": the student will choose the word "rice" from the word bank. In another form of sorting, students write all the words from the word bank which belong to the specified category (see figures 4 and 5.) You can also have students sort out words according

to their vowel sounds or number of syllables.

Sorting/classifying can be a very open-ended activity. Teachers can adjust the number of responses need to complete the activity to correspond to the ability level of the student. As with many of these activities, there is ample opportunity for students to work in co-operative groups. Sometimes the categories themselves may be examples of reading skills: finding compound words.

Acrostics are much easier to construct if you use one half inch graph paper. Keeping the columns straight is easier with graph paper. Circle the letters in the clue words which will spell the missing word (see figure 6.) This activity can be designed with either word or picture clues.

Finding blends or digraphs is an activity which reinforces reading skills using social studies vocabulary. In the first activity (see figure 7,) the words to be used are listed for the student. The student then circles the blend or digraph in the word. This helps the teacher see if the student knows what blends or digraphs are and if he/she can recognize blends or digraphs in words. In another form, the teacher lists just the blend or digraph (see figure 8) and the student must find an example from the word list.

Vowel sounds can be sorted, too. The headings, for

example, are "short a" and "long a." The student must sort words from the word bank according to whichever category the words belong to (see figure 9.) This activity can be made more difficult by adding words with "long a" sounds which do not have the .letter "a" in them, like the word "sleigh." Putting words which are neither "long a" or "short a" can make the activity more difficult, too. The word "card" would be an example. The teacher can adjust the challenge level to fit the ability of the student. A related activity would be to have students search for words that have silent letters. This is appropriate especially if you are talking about the silent "e" rule or vowel digraphs like "ai" or "ea".

Puzzle boxes are one way of analyzing the shape of the word. Use one half inch graph paper to write and trace the shape of the word. The letter "a" is one box. The letter "h" is 2 boxes tall (see figure 10.) Many children learn to recognize words by their shape. You can also draw a picture of each word as a clue (see figure 11) which reinforces the meaning of each word. If you are doing a puzzle box activity with a small group or the entire class, use "100 chart paper" to construct your boxes. The paper will save you time and result in a neater product.

Word searches can also be constructed using one half

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inch graph paper (see figure 12.) You can also use "100 chart paper" for small/large group instruction. Start by filling in the spaces where you want words to go. Finish by filling in the blanks. The graph paper makes a neater product. It can be photocopied or dittoed for seat work. Word banks are very helpful to the student. I do not write words backwards or diagonally. This is confusing for students.

Alphabetical order is another activity which can be used to reinforce reading/social studies skills. The teacher lists a group of words and the student numbers them in the correct order (see figure 13.) In a variation, the teacher gives each student 3 word cards, the student puts these words in alphabetical order. The teacher continues to hand each child a word card which the student places in the right order within the list he/she has started. This a good small group activity. Again, the teacher adjusts the difficulty of the activity by shortening or lengthening the number of words each student uses. If you have a simple picture of something pertaining to the unit, you can make an alphabetical order dot-to-dot using words from the unit (see figure 14.)

In making an alphabetical list, the student uses one word for each letter of the alphabet. The words must pertain to the unit under study (see figure 15.) Explain to the

students that there will not always be a vocabulary word for each letter of the alphabet. After the word list is completed, each child takes a letter and the word, uses it in a sentence, and draws an illustration. The respelling can be used, too. The pages are then collated and bound into a class big book. The children have made a dictionary. If there is more than one word for each letter, the other words can be added. Children who complete their first assigned page can do pages for other words. You can also paste each sheet together and make an alphabet frieze to display. This looks great when displayed in the hall above the lockers.

By modeling the activity (this includes all activities under discussion) the teacher demonstrates not only how to complete each activity, he demonstrates the thought processes needed to complete the activity. These activities involve thinking about how words are used. Thinking skills are an important part of the reading program.

An easier type of word search involves putting the words in a row across a line (see figure 16.) This is a good beginning to teach the concept of word searches. Children circle the words found in the line. There will be no words going down the paper. For beginning students this is good because we do teach children to read left-to-right and not reading down the paper.

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GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

With a word and picture match the children write a word from the word bank which goes with the picture you have drawn (see figure 17.) This is easy to draw on a ditto master or photocopy. You can also draw the pictures on the black board. This activity, along with the others in the article, make excellent seat work activities which are easily corrected. In fact, correcting them as a whole group after work-time, saves time for the teacher. Students see these activities as games, not necessarily work. Correcting their own work provides immediate feedback. Children share their answers and explain them, too. The discussion is an important part of the activity.

If you have access to a good set of pictures, you can do this activity as a small group, directed vocabulary exercise. The "National Geographic Magazine" has excellent pictures on almost every social studies unit you can imagine. These pictures are often superior to those pictures and illustrations provided in texts and literature. Cut out the pictures, make word cards, and the students can begin to match the word with the picture. If you have access to a good number of magazines, children can cut-out those pictures they like, paste them in newsprint booklets and label them. There is often a wealth of detail in pictures and many times children dislike drawing the illustrations for their sentences. You may want to send a letter home, asking parents

to donate old travel magazines like the "Geographic."

Often it is helpful to use diacritical marks on the vocabulary cards to help students "sound-out" their words. If you are teaching dictionary skills, using diacritical marks on the word cards is a great way to introduce dictionary respellings to students. This way they can focus on your word card and not be distracted by other things on dictionary pages.

Describing words is a way to involve students in using adjectives and adverbs. The teacher provides the noun or the verb from the social studies vocabulary list (see figure 18.) The student chooses as describing word for each example from the word bank. Not providing a word bank would make this a more challenging activity. If the noun was "paddy", the student might write "wet" as a describing word.

Rhyming pairs is a means of reviewing rhyming words. The student chooses "X" number of words from the word bank and thinks of rhyming words for each of them. The teacher selects how many words each student needs to use to reach closure. For less able students the teacher provides a list of words with an appropriate selection of rhyming words from the word bank (see figure 19.) Challenge your students to think of rhyming words that could also be describing words.

GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

To develop sequencing skills, the children can make something from the unit and describe the steps they took to complete the activity. If studying China, a small group of students can prepare rice. Activities that involve food are very enlots of fun for children and children seem to attend better to the sequencing involved. They can then write or draw the steps they took to complete the activity. When beginning this activity, it is necessary for the teacher to model the activity first. The teacher completes the activity. Afterwards, the students tell what was done and the teacher records the procedure on graph paper.

The teacher can also put a series of simple sequence pictures on paper for children to cut out and paste in order. Having first had experiences with the sequencing activity, during the first part of the year, makes the sequence writing/drawing process for the students much easier. Let the children know in advance how many steps they will need. Some children are too general, while others do not provide enough detail.

Children can design their own travel brochures and travel posters. This activity enables the student to persuade the reader. From this the teacher can lead a discussion of fact or opinion about selected aspects of the social studies unit. It is necessary to have data about two sides of the issue. Collecting interesting news articles is helpful.

Laminate the articles so that they remain useable for several years. Children can also design their own postage stamps or even "mint" money from the region under study. Children need to know why and how items are selected for inclusion on coins or stamps.

Compare and contrast is another reading skill activity. You may want to use a Venn diagram. One circle represents our neighborhood. The other circle represents the country or region under study. The overlapping areas represent the similarities between the two. Or you can set up a chart: column 1 for our region, column 2 for similarities, and column 3 for the region under study. Children can compare and contrast regions in the same way they compare and contrast story characters or books they have read. As always, when beginning a skill such as this the children need you to model the activity before they attempt it independently.

Conclusion: Reading skills activities can be used to reinforce social studies vocabulary and concepts. Initially, it is difficult to design these activities. After designing these activities, however, the teacher has a repertoire of activities from which to choose in order to assist in effective and efficient instruction. These activities are student centered. Children enjoy the activities and learn

from them.

FIGURE 1: BRAINSTORMING

Asia, bicycle, parade, market, pagoda, paddy, junk, apartment, cloth, good luck, paper, money, kite, zoo, pottery, fireworks, firecrackers, explode, red, China, Beijing, bamboo, New Year, jade, fortune cookie, restaurant, dragon, lantern, silk, panda, rice, tea, chopstick, noodle, alphabet, Yangtse River, Great Wall, harbor, Hong Kong, Chinatown, Chinese-Americans, trade, nightengale, emperor, mountains, wiseman, wildman, Yerin, celebrate, language, endangered, inventions, wonton, ocean, umbrella

FIGURE 2: SORTING

Sorting

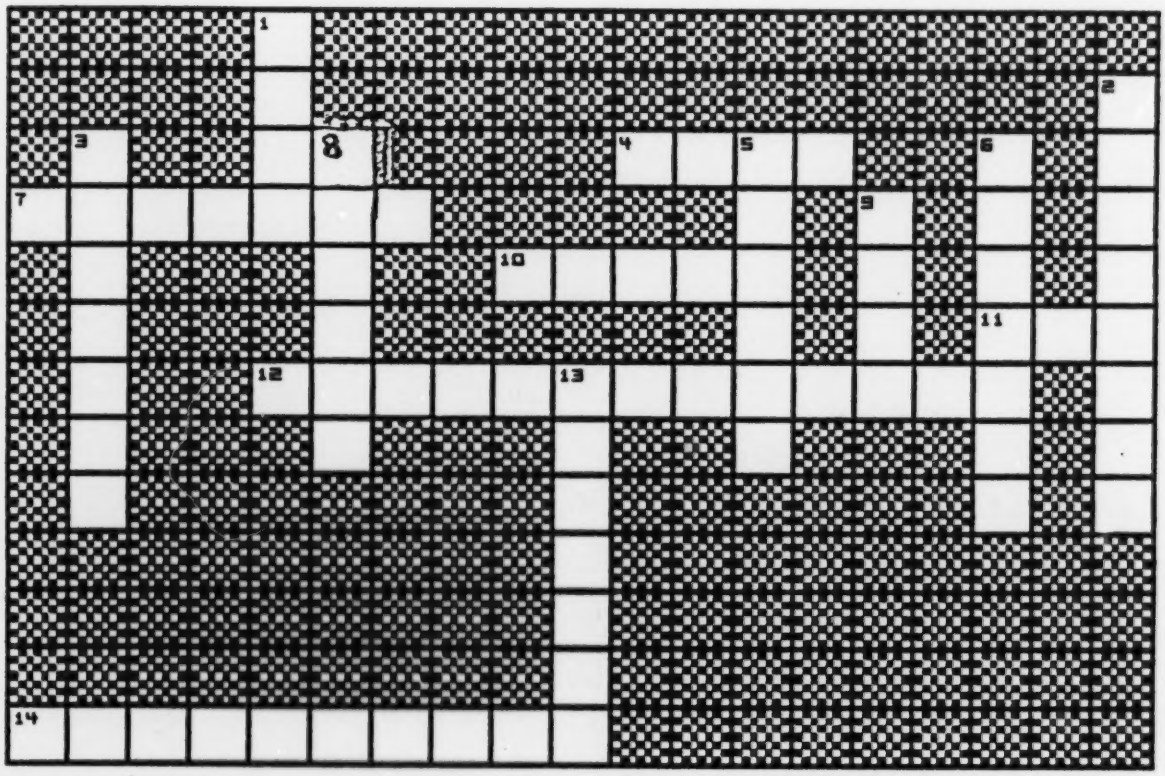
food	not food
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

WORD BANK: fortune cookie, rice, panda, chopstick, noodle, silk, jade, tea,

GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

FIGURE 2: CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CHINA



ACROSS CLUES

4. used to make bead necklaces
7. a chinese holiday
10. an endangered animal
11. something to drink
12. a dessert food
14. something to eat with

DOWN CLUES

1. a cereal used for food
2. the chinese ----- is different from ours
3. the capital city of china
5. a symbol of good luck for the new year
6. it has a candle inside it
8. a plant used for many things, sometimes used as food
9. an expensive cloth made from cocoons
13. a food sometimes crunchy

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GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

FIGURE 4: CLASSIFYING

Classifying

Choose words from the brainstorming list to complete each column.

animals	food	water bodies	New Year
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.		3.
	4.		4.
	5.		

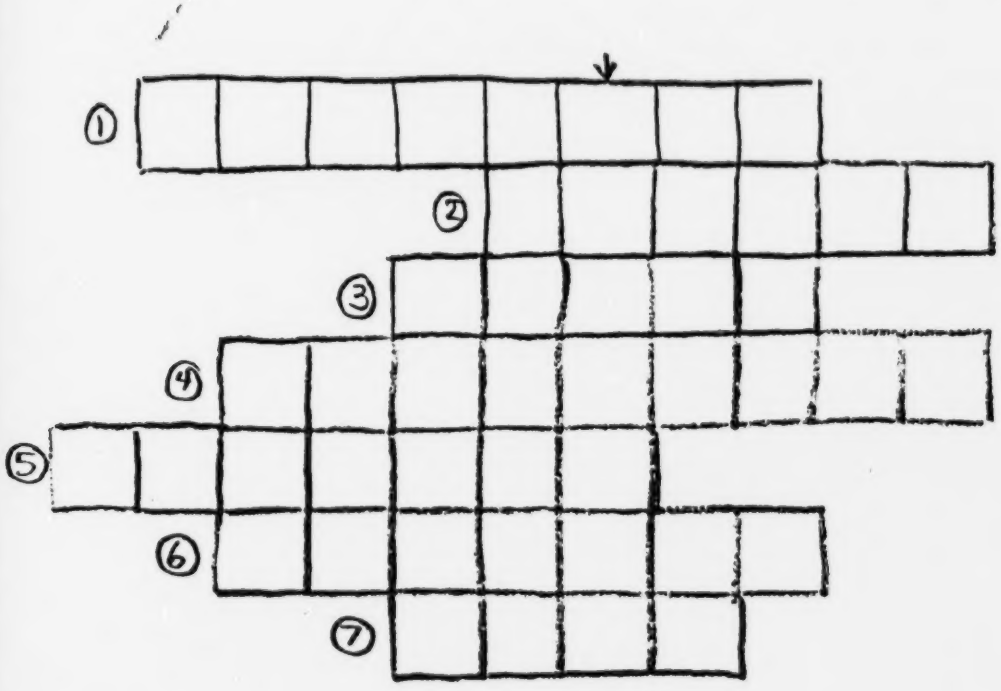
FIGURE 5: SORTING

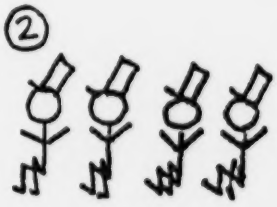
1. food _____
2. animal _____
3. something to drink _____
4. capital city _____
5. place to live _____

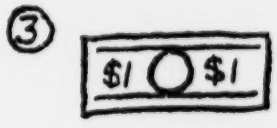
WORD BANK: panda, rice, tea, Beijing, apartment

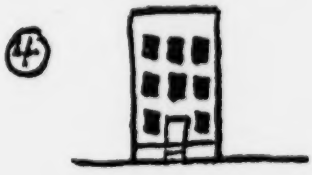
GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

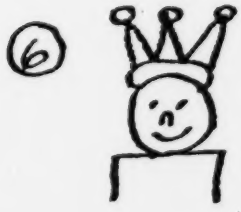
FIGURE 6: ACROSTIC WITH UNIT VOCABULARY

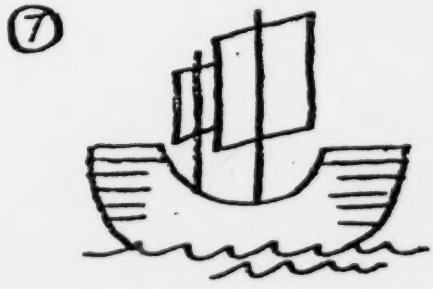












magic word is: _____

word bank: junk bicycle money
emperor apartment parade
umbrella

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FIGURE 7: BLENDS AND DIGRAPHS

use these blends and digraphs to make words about China

cl st Ch dr ph str sh

1. _____ina 2. al_____abet 3. bicy_____e

4. _____eets 5. _____agon 6. clo_____

7. _____ops 8. chop_____icks

find a word with each of these blends or digraphs in the word bank

1. cl_____ 2. ck_____ 3. cr_____

4. st_____ 5. tr_____ 6. br_____

7. pl_____ 8. dr_____

For as free-form activity, let the students find all words with blendfs or digraphs. See if they remember what blends and digraphs are. Remember to give them a definite number to find so that the student knows when he/she has reached closure.

FIGURE 8: BLENDS AND DIGRAPHS

circle the blend or digraph in each word

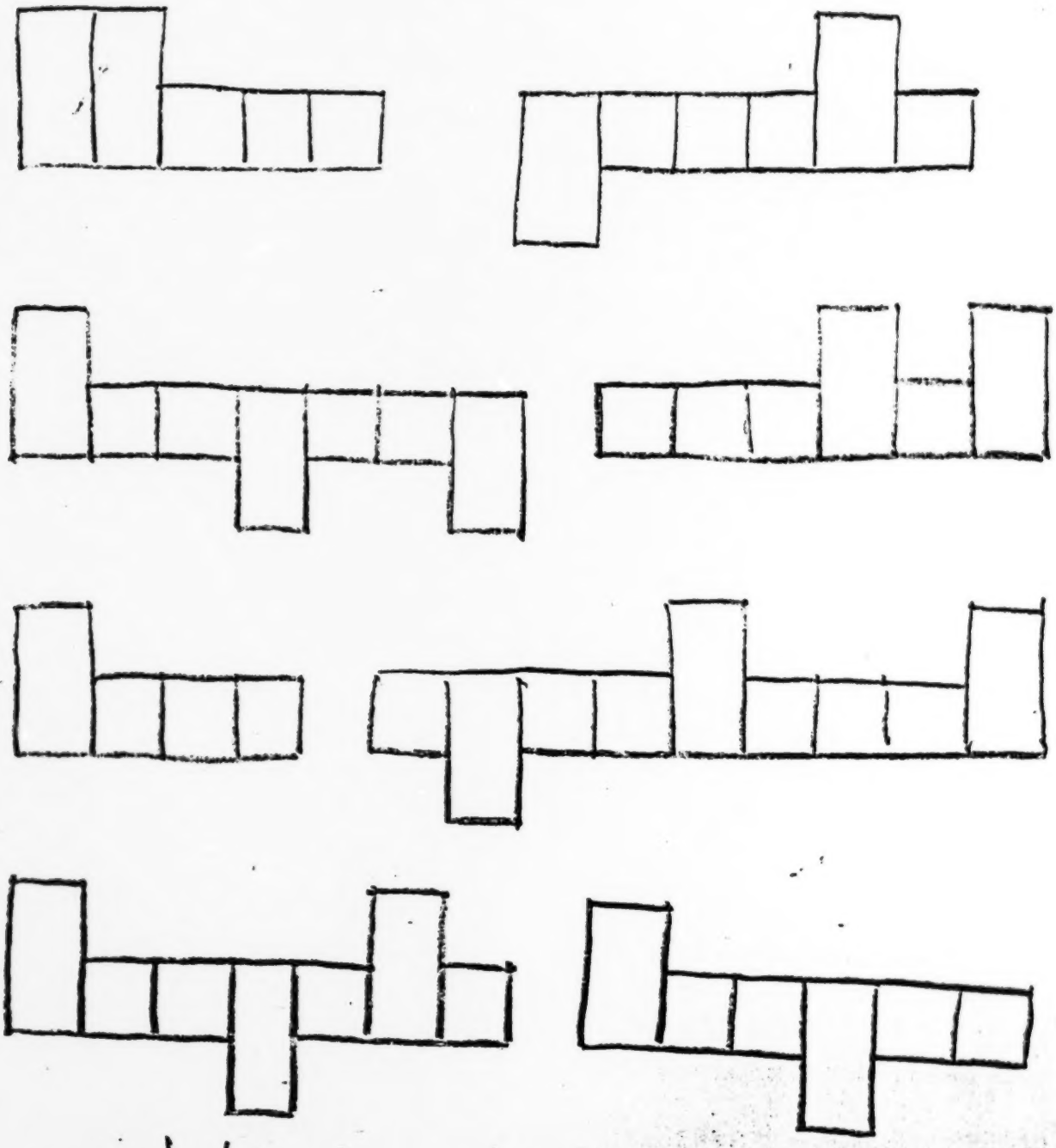
umbrella celebrate trade

Great Wall alphabet chopstick

restaurant firecrackers cloth

GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

FIGURE 10: PUZZLE BOXES



word bank: dragon bicycle apartment Asia market Beijing China parade

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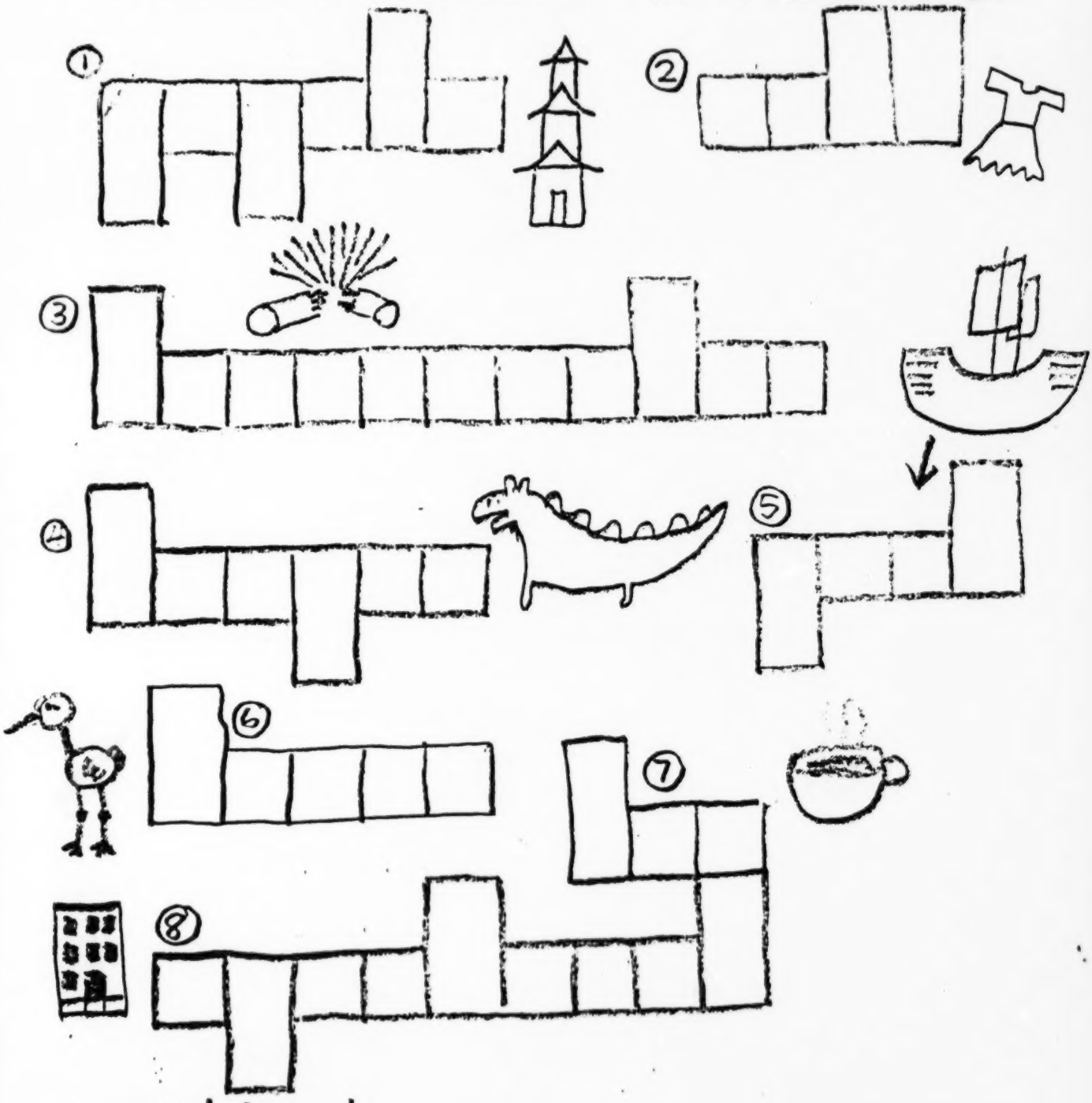
FIGURE 11: PUZZLE BOXES WITH PICTURE CLUES



word bank:

heron junk dragon apartment
pagoda firecracker silk tea

GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

FIGURE 12: WORD SEARCH

a b c d e t f g h i j k l b
m l i j B e i j i n g k l i
n a m n o a p q r o s t u c
o n r v w x y d z o a b c y
p t i d e p a r a d e f g c
q e c h i j k a l l m n o l
r r e A p q r g s e t u v e
s n w s x y z o a s i l k s
t C h i n a b n c d e f g h
u v w a x y z a b c d e f g

word bank: market
Beijing tea rice noodles silk parade
China Asia bicycles dragon lantern

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FIGURE 9: VOWEL SOUNDS

find a word with each vowel sound

long vowel sounds	short vowel sounds
a	a
e	e
i	i
o	o
u	u

WORD BANK: chopstick, junk, pagoda, fortune cookie, rice, silk, market, tea, Asia, paddy

FIGURE 13: ALFHABETICAL ORDER

number these words in ABC order from 1 to 5

_____China	_____chopsticks
_____Beijing	_____restaurant
_____Hong Kong	_____egg roll
_____Shanghai	_____bamboo
_____trade	_____noodle

How do the words in each list belong together?

GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

FIGURE 14: DOT-TO-DOT

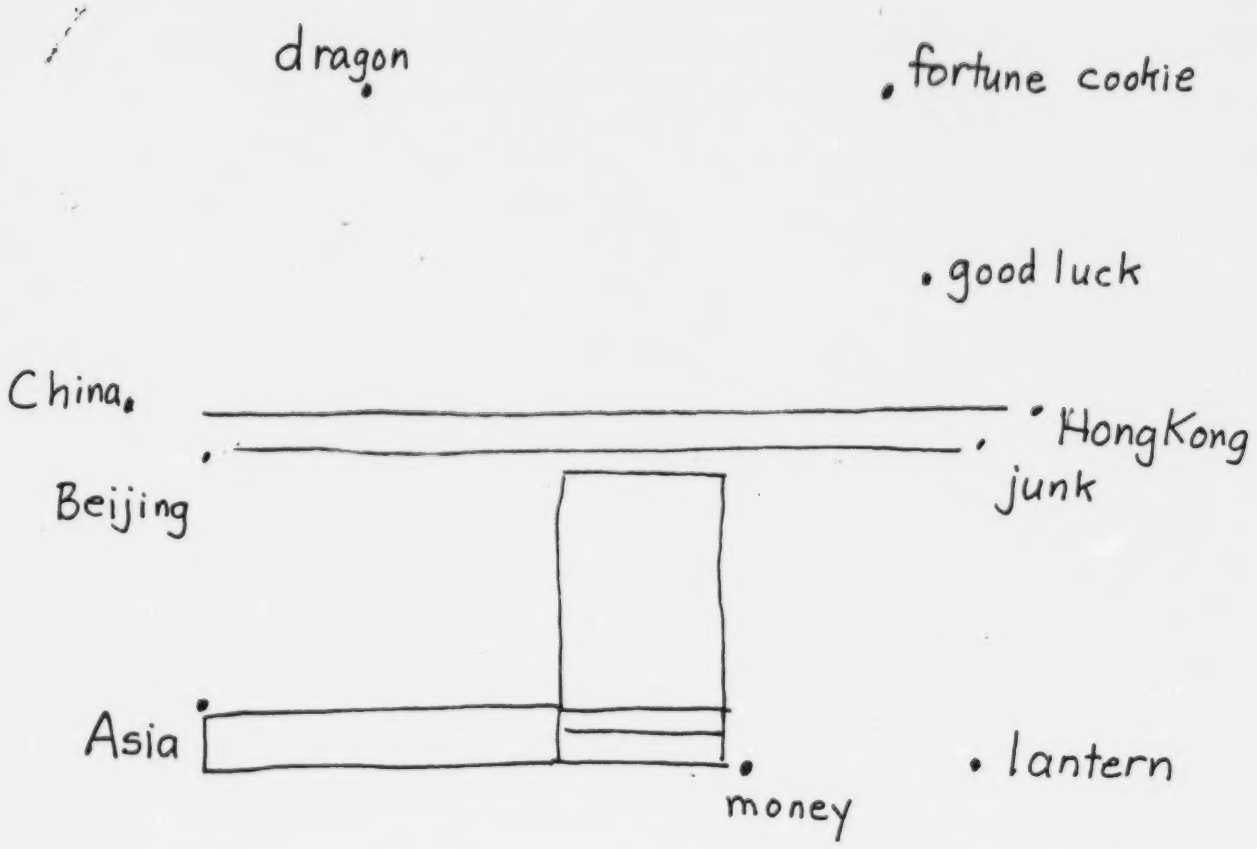

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FIGURE 15: ALPHABET LIST

write a word for each letter of the alphabet

A Asia	N noodle
B bamboo	O ocean
C China	P panda
D dragon	Q
E egg roll	R rice
F fireworks	S silk
G games	T tea
H Hong Kong	U umbrella
I inventions	V
J junk	W wonton
K kite	X
L lantern	Y Yangtse River
M money	Z zoo

Extra: draw a picture for each

Extra: can you think of other words for each letter

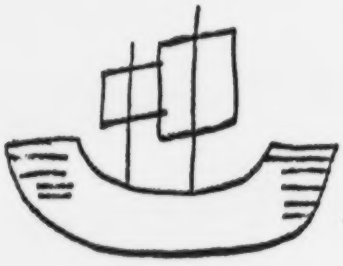
FIGURE 16: WORD SEARCH IN A LINE

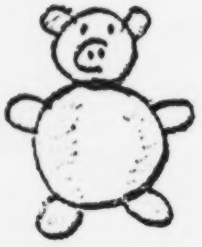
circle each mystery word in the line

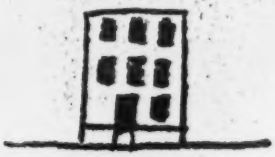
1. teabcdragonefghijunklmnophinkloumbraellanoecdnoodle
2. abcdefortunecookiefghijklantyernopandaqrstuvswertyy
3. hijklmnoodleqrsilkteauvwxyzoofredswayearjuiopapergh
4. lmnopqrsilktuvwzyBeijingapartmentbacdesilkonforiceaince

GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

FIGURE 17: WORD AND PICTURE MATCH







word bank

apartment noodle

lantern bamboo

chopsticks junk

tea dragon rice

panda flag jade

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GEOGRAPHY AND READING SKILLS

FIGURE 18: DESCRIBING WORDS

writer a describing word for each of these

_____bamboo

_____panda

_____tea

_____rice

_____dragon

extra: use your describing word pairs in sentences

FIGURE 19: RHYMING WORDS

write a rhyming word for each of these

dragon _____

jade _____

rice _____

year _____

money _____

extra: can you write a rhyming word that is also a describing word

extra: use your rhyming pairs in sentences